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Life & Family

WELLNESS MAGAZINE

SUMMER EDITION 2

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Zelda la Grange

Madiba's angel aide



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Dear Life & Family readers

THE ART OF GIVING TO YOURSELF

Many of us spend the majority of our day caring for and answering to other people's wants and needs. It is only when we finally fall into bed that we realise we haven't had a moment to ourselves, to focus on how we are feeling; or to cater to our own priorities. I find that if I allow this to happen for too long, I start to feel I am living in an emotional desert, simply 'doing' things without any conscious purpose. It is only from our hearts that all things meaningful stem... if I do not constantly check the condition of my heart; I find I am not firing on all cylinders, and not being the best I can be.

This holiday season take a moment to simply be the unique miracle that you are. Set aside 20 minutes a day to feel your state of mind, to have a conversation with yourself, to simply sit and contemplate all that you are.

That soundtrack that is constantly playing in our heads often needs a track adjustment from 'I can't' or 'I'm not enough' to 'I am whole and complete' and 'I am beautiful and I love myself'. Make a pledge to be kind to yourself by resting your body, make a decision or take action about a difficult relationship that you have been putting off, and start a loving relationship with your inner soul. Acknowledge your strengths, and everyday remind yourself of your special talents. It may help to review events where you achieved something or which you successfully overcame. Choose to see past those extra kilos to your striking eyes, your aristocratic nose, your elegant hands, or good posture.

Just for a moment let the rest of the world around you stop, take a deep breath and shine your love and attention inwards to the magnificent person that you are.

The greatest gift you can give the world is you...

May you choose to hold peace and love in your hearts this season.

Mercédes Westbrook

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The angel *behind* the saint

CRecognised around the world as a peace maker of almost saint-like status, Nelson Mandela continues to attract world headlines. But it is the woman behind his professional life – Zelda la Grange – who is recognised for her quiet and dedicated loyalty to the South African hero, organising his frenetic diary and most often having to ward off those very same media hounds.

ontained, discerning yet gently warm, Zelda la Grange doesn't often get angry – when she does it is usually because of what she terms "people's sense of entitlement" to Mandela's time. It is this sense of fierce loyalty and tenderness for her boss, whom she calls Khulu (grandfather), that has earned Zelda the reputation of a 'wicked witch', "with broom and black hat included," laughs Zelda. "I have to say no all the time to people," she explains, "and people don't like rejection, it is part of human nature. But Mandela has retired three times now and at 88 years of age he wants to rest. I have to make sure there is a balance between him having personal space but also not being too secluded. In the beginning I used to cry when people said bad things about me simply because I was rejecting their requests, in order to protect Madiba, now it doesn't affect me at all."

At age 36, Zelda has had a lifetime of experiences to bring her to the place she is today. It is an education that has been learnt through basic relations and interactions with the everyday world, teachings that have benefited both her approach to people and her life.

"I am still passionate about serving, and have learnt to cope with the challenges of my job by being obsessively organised. Over the past 13 years of working for Mr Mandela I have made wonderful friendships with colleagues, people whom I can call on for advice and spiritual wisdom when I am having

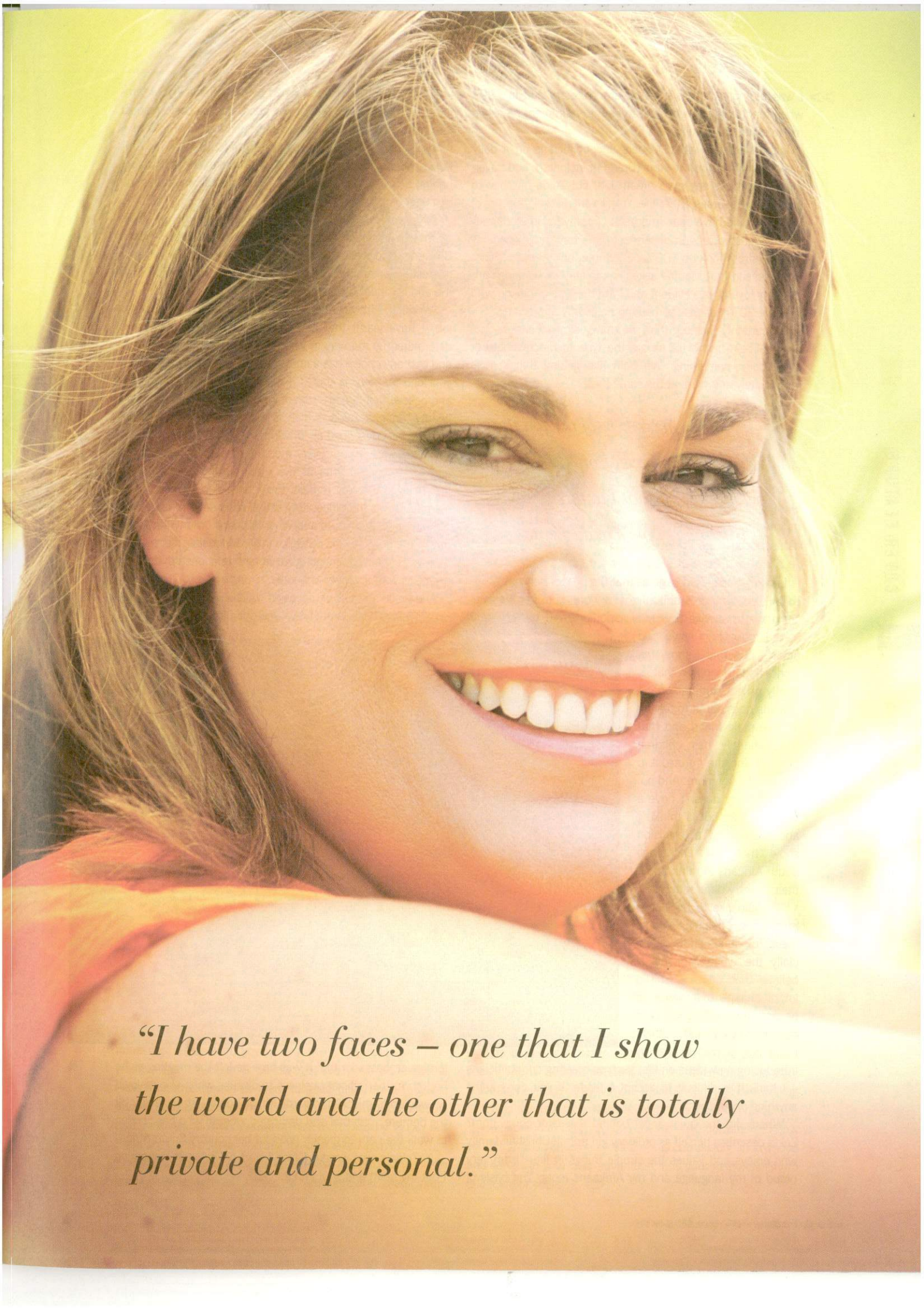
a bad day, be it personal or business. They keep me humble and they accept and understand me for the person I am.

"The one aspect of my job that has affected me, even from a personal perspective, is that I am wary about trusting people's real intentions. Too many people have tried to get close to Madiba through me, by showering me with gifts and pretending to be my best friend. Now I have a clear set of rules and my true friends whom I surround myself with don't ask me to get books signed or to meet him."

So how did a traditional Afrikaans girl from Pretoria become the trusted companion of the past leader of the ANC's anti-Apartheid movement? "After high school I wanted to study drama but my father said there was not enough earning potential in a dramatic career, so I did a three year secretarial diploma at the Pretoria Technikon. My first job was in the newly established Department of State Expenditure. I soon moved up to the Human Resources department which was more challenging, and then in 1994 I applied for a typist job advertised for a senior minister.

"On the day of the interview I was asked if I was interested in being on the President's personal staff. At the time I said yes, because I was commuting a long way every day from my parents' house to work and this job was in the Union Buildings and therefore more convenient. When I said yes, I never anticipated it would grow to a job such as this. In 1996

>>



*“I have two faces – one that I show
the world and the other that is totally
private and personal.”*



Peace,

heavenly peace

By Sadie Walpole

Does the very thought of the festive season stress you out?

Are you already dreading the cooking, cleaning and family bickering that comes with the added work of an extended holiday away from your normal routine? When spirits are at their highest, so too are our emotions. Here's how to swirl a cloak of goodwill around yourself and step gracefully into a time of peace and joy.

When you are muscling your way through jostling crowds to the upteenth rendition of Jingle Bells, it can be hard to see past this season's marketing superficiality and keep focused on the true benefits of this special time. Whether you celebrate Christmas or not, December provides us all with a chance to get together with our extended families, and friends old and new. While you can't control other people's stress you can control yours. Whether you are a visiting guest this year or host to hordes, whether staying at home for quiet time or travelling to an exotic holiday destination, you need to consider just how you will ensure you have a good time.

GOODWILL TO ALL MEN

This time of year is a reminder to many of us of a blessed life and a chance to focus on being extra generous, more understanding, and kinder to our fellow man. A good place to start is at home, with our families. Holiday time often

means we have high expectations of having a good time and we are bound to be let down, especially when mom-in-law, who is camping on your doorstep, is just waiting to pass a comment about your housekeeping skills and you just know Uncle Henry is going to drink too much and make a scene. No one knows your family and their unique idiosyncrasies better than you, so plan ahead to maximise the positive time spent with loved ones.

Structure time to keep hassles to a minimum by avoiding situations where conflicts typically arise. For example, you could have a sudden hearing failure and choose to let cutting remarks sail off on a pocket of hot air, or politely excuse yourself and go for a walk in nature. You could minimise the alcohol options by offering sparkling grape juice, beer shandies, and alcohol free cocktails and keep the imbibers busy by electing activities like playing Father Christmas for the kids or teaching them how to ride their new bikes.



>> This is your opportunity to put aside old hurts and indignation and drop old beliefs about how things 'should be' – often the most change is enacted when we chose to shift our own stance on things. Rather allow others to be and focus on carrying yourself with integrity.

Understand that small children need guidance and one-on-one attention – your attention. Structure the holidays so that everyone gets a chance to do what they want, and make it clear that one hour of each day (at least) is yours to be alone.

Then, extend your goodwill to those who work at making our lives easier, and safer. Take a moment to consider all those people who actually work harder at this time of year and don't get to be with their families, from your garbage removal service, to the store clerks and till checkers, to the traffic and crime police, hospital staff and emergency care workers.

South Africa celebrates its diverse and unique cultural make-up and this is the perfect opportunity for us to honour each other and strengthen the bonds of trust and acceptance. When you are in a mile long queue, remember that every relationship is an opportunity to learn and experience something new, so start a conversation with someone in line with you and reach out. Even if they don't respond, you have expanded your own ability to give and receive.

If you are going to be alone over this period, you may see it as an opportunity to turn your loneliness into positive action. Research shows that if you want to feel good, do



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something for those less fortunate. Feeding homeless people or giving to charities are powerful ways to recover the meaning of Christmas. This is the time to be a good elf and reach out to the neediest person nearest to you, and give them the gift that you are.

DISCIPLINE YOUR POCKET

We've all done it, overspent at Christmas and endured the torture of a barren and desperate January waiting for payday, which tends to wipe out all our good holiday memories. No matter how festive you are feeling, using your head and a budget that will mean you still get to enjoy Christmas and meet the New Year with confidence. Think back to last year and list those experiences that were meaningful and which you would like to repeat, and those which were not worth the time, money or effort. Then steer your days in that direction.

Often it is the simple things that bring the most joy. Most parents will agree that children often find the box more fascinating than the toy that came inside it. Instead of spending money on expensive glitzy toys that break, buy a practical gift such as a hose pipe... something that will keep little children entertained for hours and keep your garden looking green. Give children a small spade and a packet of seeds and show them how to grow things. You may even want to start a small vegetable garden, and it is a wonderful way to spend time together, teaching your kids something important.

If you are able to delay your gratification, hold off buying that new TV set or plane ticket or clothing item until the sales in January and you will be rewarded by getting it at half the price.

Food bills are high enough as it is, and December may be a good time to create a positive ritual or family custom such as introducing a special themed meal that adds meaning and atmosphere to Christmas. Why not try preparing unleavened bread, fish and fruits as the disciples would have enjoyed in biblical days, or asking each person to bring a speciality dish to share.

But most importantly put away money for January's bills now and as part of your new year's resolution commit to starting a personal savings account that will give you a little extra for something special next year. [Link](#)

TIPS

- Give a gift that has no monetary value but has been chosen for its personal value, such as a selection of stones you found and treasured, favourite flowers made into a bouquet with a poem, baked personalised biscuits, a hand-made nativity scene, fixing something that has been broken, a back massage, breakfast in bed, a family outing to the park, plant a tree for someone special and name it, or make a personalised family album of favourite memories.
- With normal routines gone, children get over-excited and over-tired. Be firm about how you do things despite visitors' needs, and keep to normal routine as much as possible, especially when it comes to their diet. A child who is running on fizzy drinks and sweets is likely to be unco-operative, physically stressed and easily tired.
- Think about what you really want this Christmas – if you hate cooking while others are relaxing, go out for Christmas lunch, have a champagne breakfast or a braai outside or cook the turkey in advance and eat it sliced cold with salads on the day. Admit when you need help and keep people busy with cooking and table clearing duties or entertaining the children – everyone likes to be involved.

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